38th Bomb Group

823 rd Squadron

71st Squadron

822 nd Squadron

405th Squadron

"The Sun Setters"

THE 38TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION (WW II) JANUARY, 2005

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Good News! Our 38th Bomb Group Association is alive and well. Members present at the reunion voted to continue the Association and there were no proposals to disband. All the negative talk about terminating the Association was replaced with positive talk. Plus, a group of interested members met and discussed ways to enhance our web site and advertise the important role the 38th Bomb Group played during WW II.

Chris Guest has done a great job as Web Master and the web site will be even better in the future. If you have not recently visited the 38th BG web site, check it out at ***www.sunsetters38bg.com*** It is a good one and it's getting better. Check it out often to keep up with changes. There are plans to increase its capacity so as to contain more interesting stories. If you do not have a computer with access to the web, check with your local library - they usually have a computer for the public to use.

We can all agree that the 38th BG has never received the credit it deserves for its WW II service. Also, the chances of Larry Hickey finishing our book, continues to be very doubtful (as Dizzy Dean would say - the chances are slim to none).

Here is where each of you can help. Send your stories about experiences you had while in the 38th to both David Gunn (***pappygnk@juno.com***) for printing in our newsletter and Chris Guest (***sunsetterb25@aol.com***) for posting on our web site. They both are doing a great service for the Association.

David Gunn is organizing all of the stories previously printed in our newsletters in an approximate chronological order. This will help develop a chronological history of the 38th BG activities during WW II. (see page 2, **FROM THE EDITOR)**

Al Kennedy did a super service for the Association by recording on CDs all the information members had given Larry Hickey. Every paid up Association member will be receiving free copies of these CDs. Information obtained from these CDs should help to generate more stories for our web site and newsletters. But we need more of your stories, too – send them to Gunn & Guest.

We have a lot of good people who are donating their energy and time to keep our 38 BG Association going strong. Check the list of 38th BG Officers 2005 - 2006 on page 2 of this newsletter to see who these prime movers are.

In closing, here's wishing everyone a "HAPPY & HEALTHY 2005**". Also, let us all say a prayer for our troops who are currently in harms way serving our great country. May they return safely to their loved ones.**

Jack DeTour

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NOTICE

No Dues -

No News -

Dues are Due

Check your address label for your status!

THE TWO-HATTED GUY (SECT./TREAS.) NEEDS YOUR ATTENTION!

A long time ago I found out that the things that seemed the most important about this job was the Treasurer's part, but the Secretary's function turned out to occupy the majority of the time. It's the old proverb, "For want of a nail ----".

You wouldn't believe how many nails it takes to put out all the correct information for the 38th Bomb Group Association! There are seven files alone to keep up with changes in each member's line in the Active Roster. The changes can be a dues check, an address, a phone number or an area code, a new winter address, or deleting a winter address or a death. They all matter if you want the correct information on your personal line in the roster. With it, we can all stay in touch.

So, check your line for possible errors or old information or changed area code on phone numbers, especially if there is a question mark after yours. **Let's get rid of those question marks!**

If you have decided going down to Florida was too much of a hassle this winter, let me know you are canceling that winter address because the big January issue with all the lists and the roster has been sent to that winter address if you didn't! If this January newsletter then has to be sent to your summer address by first class mail it may cost as much as .80 or 90 cents or more!!! So let's "nail" these problems down!

Bill McKinstry

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NOTICE!! Did you stop to NOTICE THE NOTICE on page 1??? NO DUES - NO NEWS!! Bill McKinstry won't give Orland Gage money to send THE SUN SETTERS to guys who haven't paid their dues. Put your money in the pot!

FROM THE EDITOR

David Gunn (no relation with "Pappy")

Let me take this opportunity to greet you and to give you a peek at what we hope to deliver to you in the next several issues.

It seems highly unlikely that Larry Hickey will be able to deliver the ***Saga of the Sun Setters.*** The editorial board of **The Sun Setters** has determined to make this newsletter something that will be suitable to keep as a document to record many of the experiences that we endured through those years that the 38th Bomb Group served our nation during WW II.

We recommend that you purchase a nice three-ring binder in which you can place each issue. We suggest that it be a nice binder with cover that provides an insert pocket. The May issue will contain a cover sheet to insert in the pocket and a title page.

The news letter is formatted so that you can punch holes along the left margin.

We plan to make the next several issues into a chronological history of the 38th BG. This January issue will cover the period of our history from the time the Group was constituted in December of 1940, through April of 1942. The May issue will cover the period of May through August of 1942, and the September issue will cover September through December of 1942. Subsequent issues will cover similar periods in 1943, 1944, and 1945.

We are arranging all the items you have contributed to previous issues in a chronological sequence to correspond to the periods to be covered in future issues. We will make selections from these items to be included in the appropriate issue as space will permit.

Thus, you will have a sequential history of the 38th Bomb Group which will remind you and inform your family and friends of what life was like during those years. Each issue will also have a broader historical column relating our experiences to the greater events of WW II to provide a larger perspective to our service experience.

During the past two years, Al Kennedy, with Larry Hickey's cooperation and assistance, has obtained much of Hickey's research notes and many of the photographs furnished to Hickey by our members. Al has gone to great lengths to reduce these to digitized CD format. We anticipate using much of this material in filling out our story in coming issues.

It won't be all that we anticipated in ***The Saga of the Sun Setters,*** but we hope it will be a record suitable to leave to your family and friends.

We should inform you that Larry Hickey is still responding to inquirers to his web site with optimistic anticipation of the forthcoming book. Al Kennedy has indicated that Hickey's health and the extent of his "commitment" to publish other such histories make it highly unlikely that our book will ever be published.

If you have pre-ordered copies of ***The Saga of the Sun Setters,*** we recommend that you request a refund from Larry Hickey.

International Research & Publishing Corp.
Attention: Larry Hickey
P.O. Box 3334 High Mar Station
Boulder, Colorado 80307

WANTED: Your stories !

Yes, we want more of those stories, short or long, that we can share with all who are seeking information about those years of your service to our country.

We frequently receive requests for information about individuals who served with the 38th Bomb Group or about the conditions and circumstances of that era.

Many of these requests come from relatives of our departed comrades who left this life without sharing this information with family and friends.

You can help these people come to a better understanding of what their loved ones experienced. They have a great longing to know that special person better.

Your help needed!!

The U. S. Air Force Birth Pangs

Prior to WW I, Major "Billy" Mitchell, Army Signal Corps, had associated with aviation minded individuals. Because he was too old to qualify for military flight training, he paid for his own flight training. He began to see great potential in military aviation.

The British had established the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) in 1912. By 1915 it had 166 military planes for training and combat. The French had been more exuberant about flying. Their Aeronautique Militaire had 1150 such aircraft, some superior to either the British or German.

Early in the war many Americans volunteered for Ambulance driving in France. Shortly several of them volunteered for pilot training. Several others in America volunteered for this service directly. In early 1916, these pilots became the Escadrille Americaine serving under French officers.

Because of America's neutrality at the time, the unit was redesignated Escadrille Lafayette. By the time America entered the war, this group had shot down 57 German planes and lost nine of its pilots. The unit became part of the American Air Service early in 1918.

Mitchell was sent to Europe, already embroiled in war, as an observer in 1916. When the U, S. entered the war in 1917, Lt. Colonel Mitchell was studying the French and English air operations. He began to lead in operational activities and preparing for the arrival of American units.

He was the first American Army pilot to fly in combat over enemy lines. He soon became Air Officer of the American Expeditionary Forces. In 1918 he was appointed Commander of all allied Air Services.

He assembled a force of nearly 1500 planes to provide observation and cover over ground troops and bombing behind the German lines at the Battle of St. Miheil in September, 1918.

The destruction along the supply lines behind the front caused confusion and much delay in the German retreat. Mitchell won acclaim and a battlefield promotion to Brigadier General.

The strategy was repeated shortly at the Meusse-Argonne Battle. The airplane had become an effective instrument of war and "Billy" Mitchell became an irrepressible advocate of aviation as an arm of the military.

Mitchell began laying plans with General Pershing for a parachute drop of soldiers behind the German lines to initiate a Spring offensive. Further plans were rendered

WW I PILOT FATHER OF 38TH B.G. PILOT

(Editor: Not long after I heard about the 38th BG Association in 1994 and became a member, Oliver D. Filley (71st) and I struck up a long distance relationship (east coast - west coast). I don't recall what initiated that relationship. However, O. D. shared with me that he "had to become a pilot". He sent me, by snail mail, a very interesting story which I have thought for a long time should be shared with others in the Association. The following article is extracted from a much longer record but is very appropriate for this issue of ***The Sun Setters****.)*

* * * * * *

Oliver D. Filley (father of our O. D.) was born in Boston in 1883. His mother took him to England when he was quite young following the death of his father. He was educated in some of England's finest schools. This education served to qualify him for eventual entrance to Harvard University near the turn of the century. He graduated from Harvard in 1906 and took graduate courses in mining engineering.

He was employed in mining operations in Mexico and in Rhodesia prior to WW I. Shortly after World War I broke out, he volunteered to be a chauffeur for an American hospital in Paris. He soon applied for service in the French Air Service and the British Royal Flying Corps (RFC, predecessor of the RAF). The RFC accepted him nine days before the French replied to his application.

He was first assigned to a civilian flight training school (free training because of his RFC status). After only two hours of flight training he soloed and received RFC's certificate 1101, the first American to graduate from an English military flight school. His excellent record in his childhood education in England helped pave the way for further military flight training, even though he was an American.

On 24 May, 1915, 2nd Lt. Filley picked up a brand new 80 horse power Avro 504 and headed against the wind for France, taking 90 minutes. He was assigned to the A Flight, No. 1 Squadron of the RFC. His combat orientation consisted of one flight with an observer (the plane commander) and one flight without an observer. His first operational flight was on 2 June, 1915, a reconnaissance flight on the Ypres front.

"Wireless" communication between plane and ground was in its infancy and field commanders were working out the first practical system of artillery coordination. Filley and his observer, flying a French-made plane, provided observer assistance in putting a German artillery battery out of action in mid-June.

On 6 July, Filley was flying another plane equipped with an early version of a stripped down Mk. 1 Lewis gun fired by the observer. They took to the air to hopefully assist in silencing another German battery. During their observation duties, they spotted a German plane. After some time, with intermittent engagement with the enemy, the observer ordered an attack on one of two German planes. During this attack, the observer sustained a shot in the head after firing his last round and collapsed. The plane had also received a shot in one cylinder of the engine and Filley had no other option than to run for safety. On 12 August, King George V decorated Filley with The Military Cross, the recognition for gallantry in the field.

Two weeks later, he was flying a plane equipped with a Lewis gun mounted for the pilot's use. On this flight he engaged a German plane, becoming the first American in the RFC to fire on an enemy aircraft.

He had been promoted to full Lieutenant before he was wounded in November of 1915. He was sent to England for treatment and was assigned in January, 1916, to assist in the organizing and training of new RFC squadrons. During this period he was promoted to Captain.

In September, 1916, he returned to France as commander of RFC Squadron 27, C Flight. Returning from a mission in October and preparing to land, a plane from another unit suddenly appeared and, in spite of evasive action by Filley, tore into Filley' wing. The other plane plummeted to the ground but Filley managed to side slip his plane to impact the ground with one wing which absorbed much of the shock

(Continued page 4, ***WW I PILOT****)*

WW I PILOT *(from page 3)*

and Filley only sustained minor injuries. It was later found that the other plane's wings had been improperly rigged, causing difficulty in flying since its delivery four days earlier.

He was hospitalized in France but soon transferred to England for final recovery. Following this incident, he was sent to Canada in December to join a party of RFC officers to establish the RFC's Canada training program. He was assigned as C.O. of the school at Camp Borden. He received special commendation from Canadian and American sources for the efficiency that was apparent to all who visited the post.

Following a visit in 1917 by high level U. S. Army Signal Corps officers, Filley became aware that his transfer to American military duty was being sought. On 21 September, 1917, he received word that he had been appointed to the rank of Lt. Colonel in the U. S. Signal Corps. Just before Christmas, he married Mary Pyne in New York. He was transferred from Washington to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he was appointed as the Commanding Officer of the aerial observers school in April, 1918.

Soon after, he was shipped to France and shortly to England to the Night Bombardment Section of the U. S. Air Service. He was appointed as Officer in Command of Mobilization and Training until shortly before the Armistice in November, 1918. At that time, he was involved in preparing a plan to bomb several German facilities that manufactured cellulose and nitric acid, high priority items for weapons manufacturing.

Filley was discharged in February, 1919. By 1921, he was a member of a New York Stock Exchange brokerage house. He later became a part of a consortium which helped finance Charles Lindbergh's Atlantic crossing flight attempt. His family had long had roots in St. Louis.

"On 18 January, 1961, America's first RFC Warbird died. The achievements of O. D. Filley . . have gone almost unrecognized. This is ironic in view of the fact that he was the first U. S. aviator in World War I to be decorated in the service of another country."

Now you know why **Oliver D. Filley, Jr. had to become a pilot**. And he served with the 71st Squadron of the 38th B.G. (Med.), one of the Sun Setters.

* * *

Our Oliver enlisted in the USAAF when he was 18 but continued his education at Harvard until he was called up a year later, January, 1943. He went through Cadet training at three Arkansas flight schools receiving his wings and commission in February, 1944, at Blytheville.

He was a twin engine instructor until a call for B-25 pilots transferred him to Hamilton Field, near San Francisco, in mid-1944. He soon wound up in Port Moresby and shortly joined the 71st Squadron at Hollandia. He flew 43 missions, 34 as first pilot, before he was rotated home, flying by air transport. He graduated from Harvard in June, 1947.

38th BG Station List

Langley Field, VA	1/15/41
Jackson AAB, MS	5/31/41
Movement to San Francisco	
Port of Embarkation	1/18/42
Doomben Field, Brisbane	2/25/42
Ballarat, AU	3/ 8/42
Amberley Field, AU	4/30/42
Eagle Farms, AU	*6/10/42
Breddan, AU (71st, 405th)	8/7/42
Townsville, AU	9/11/42
Port Moresby, NG	**10/25/42
Nadzab, NG	3/04/44
Biak, Shouten Islands	***10/1/44
Morotai, Moluca Islands	10/15/44
Lingayen, Phil. Islands	1/29/45
Palawan, Phil. Islands	6/21/45
Lingayen, Phil. Islands	7/01/45
Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands	7/25/45
Itazuke AB, Japan	11/16/45
Itami AB, Japan	10/26/46
Deactivated	4/01/49

** AF history site.*

***AF History site shows 71st Sq. move from Bredden to Port Moresby on 1 October and shows same move on 29 October. HQ and 405th move shown is 25 October.*

****Editor (405th): My personal records show I flew 10 missions from Biak in September, 1944. AF history site on web says 38th moved to Biak on 5 September. AF History site shows move by 822nd and 823rd on 25 and 26 August, respectively.*

*(Continued page 4, **The U. S. Air Force**)*

The U. S. Air Force - *(from page 3)*

moot when Germany finally surrendered in November, 1918.

World War I ended with a new weapon. The RAF was operating 4000 planes. Military strategists could not agree on how to use them. Following the war, Mitchell championed a separate military branch for an Air Force. He doggedly pushed for and secured tests to demonstrate successful bombing of Naval vessels.

After a trip to Japan in 1924, he predicted an eventual Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor with an attack time table that was only 25 minutes off the Pearl Harbor attack and less than two hours for the Clark Field attack on December 7/8, 1941.

Unfortunately, his enthusiasm was not shared by the old line military leaders and Mitchell's abrasive advocacy eventually led to his court martial in 1926 for insubordination.

But his message did cause responses in the Army and the Navy which led to the formation of air units in both services. Military aviators began flying border patrol, air mail, and other duties that built experience and spurred further development in the U. S.

As other nations developed military aviation, the U. S. could not afford to lag behind. Mitchell did not live to see the day when the Air Force, as a separate military branch he so forcefully urged, would become a reality.

In the decade following the war, the Army Signal Corps sent a squadron around the world and "Lindy" made his solo flight across the Atlantic. Civilian aviation began to blossom. The whole world had embraced the airplane.

The Boy Scouts of America published stories of the flying heroes of World War I, of the pioneers of Air Mail service and Border Patrol service. Boys growing up in the decade began building model airplanes and dreaming of flying the real thing some day.

The 1930s became a time of social and political unrest both in the U. S. and around the world. Italy's unrest brought Benito Mussolini to power. Germany's struggle to once again assert a national esteem brought Adolf Hitler to power. Russia struggled with internal tensions and their leaders turned attention to the outside world to divert the focus on these problems.

Italy repudiated the treaties that kept them out of Ethiopia, a former colony, and marched against that country. Germany repudiated the limitations on its military and began building a fleet and an army with an air arm. Japan repudiated the treaty that limited its naval power.

*(Continued page 5, **The U. S. Air Force**)*

The U. S. Air Force - *(from page 4)*

Wars were started that served as test programs for new weapons, including airplanes. A civil war in Spain enabled the Germans and Italians to test weapons and planes while the other side was a test program for Russian weapons and planes. American volunteers flew Russian planes for the Loyalists. Japan's invasion of Manchuria, Korea, and in 1937, China, became test and troop training programs for its weapon's developers and military officers.

In September, 1939, Germany threw down the gauntlet, invading Poland; the French and British could no longer negotiate or appease. The U. S. was not really ready for full involvement and technically stayed on the side line. American industry began gearing up, supplying "Lend Lease" equipment the U. S. sent to England. The old WW I "Four Stacker" U. S. destroyers in San Diego Bay were refurbished and sent to sea to guard the convoys carrying supplies to Britain. German submarines took a devastating toll of both Naval and Merchant Marine ships in the North Atlantic.

Japan continued to flaunt it's power in the western Pacific. The U. S. tried to talk tough but did not halt the shipments of scrap iron, timber, and petroleum until the end of the decade. At that point, the U. S. was trying to ramp up a military production program to present a persuasive power to all belligerent powers.

But some of the young dreamers of flying had accumulated several hours of stick time and they volunteered for the RAF and RCAF. They became the brilliant Eagle Squadrons flying British fighter planes across the English channel. They, too, generated more dreams and dreamers.

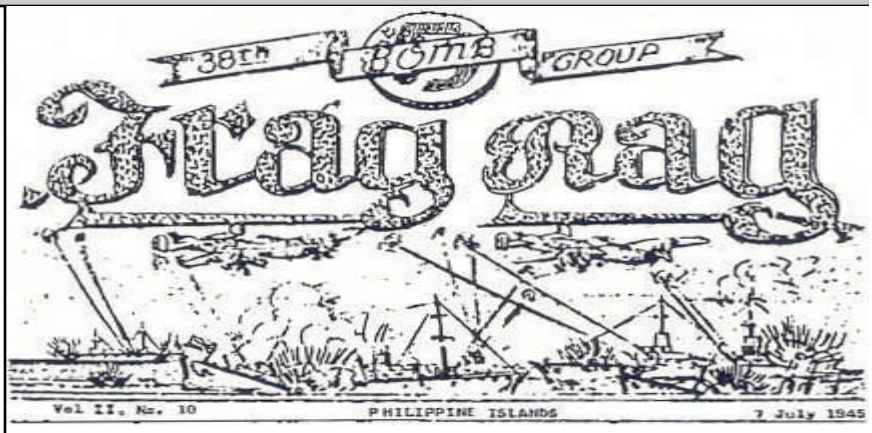
Japan reached the point where it determined that its destiny was to establish a "Co-prosperity Sphere" encompassing all of Asia and the Southwestern Pacific nations and island "protectorates" to provide the resources necessary to build a highly industrialized nation.

The U. S. refused to yield to these aspirations which ignored the rights of other nations and peoples.

Meanwhile, recruiters began signing up Air Corps reservist pilots on the home front in 1940/41 to fly for Claire Chenault in China against the Japanese. More dreamers were born.

The U. S. was building its military strength and establishing new aviation units.

On the eve of Pearl Harbor, the British had stopped Rommel's first drive toward



*Editor: In this and subsequent issues, items taken from previous issues of **"The Sun Setters"** will be noted by **SS, 00/00**, meaning month and year. Such items may be only a portion of the referenced item and may be slightly altered for clarity and to fit space requirements. The information in some items may duplicate information in another item and may differ in some details but they are the recollections of the contributors. We welcome your recollections and we urge you to bring errors to our attention. We reserve the right to alter names or other details that may cause embarrassment to individuals or their families.*

HISTORY OF 38TH BOMB GROUP

(This history appeared in FRAG RAG 7/01 , and 7/14/45, provided by A. C. West, with minimal editing in the interests of space. SS, 5/91)

France was no more. London was emerging from the rubble of Luftwaffe savagery. Germany and Russia were locked in the most titanic struggle in the history of the world. Italy, under Benito Mussolini, ruled "Mare Nostrum". In the Far East, warlords of Japan agreed the time to strike for world conquest was near...

But America, already committed to sympathy to the Allies, was only beginning to pool her men and materials for physical entry into the war, a role she knew inevitable. Then, from the fiery crucible of early American preparedness, emerged an infant of the Army Air Forces - The 38th Bombardment Group (M) (BG).

The day, 15 January, 1941; the place, an old red balloon hanger at Langley Field, VA. Personnel were few, and only three B-18s were assigned to the organization. For six months only a trickling of men and equipment was added to the group, but after transfer to the Jackson Army Air Base, in Mississippi, expansion was accelerated.

Administrative and flying officers were assigned to the group from various Air Bases, Officer's Candidate Schools, and Aviation Cadet Schools; enlisted personnel came from the technical schools, gunnery schools and reception centers to bring the ranks to full strength. Fast, sleek B-26s, Martin Marauders, began to arrive to replace the obsolete B-18s. By 1 December, 1941, the group was at full strength with a smooth functioning administrative staff and a full quota of death-dealing B-26s and crews.

But the cataclysmic attack of the Japanese at Pearl Harbor on 7 December, 1941, forced the War Department to abandon it's defensive plans and prepare for an immediate war on two fronts, a change in plans greatly affecting the growth of the newly-born 38th Bombardment Group (BG). Results of the sudden entry into war saw Group ground personnel proceed to their overseas station, while aircrews with the necessary ground crews remained in the United States for further training.

Plans of the High Command indicated that B-26 bombers were to be sent to the European Theater while B-25s were to be sent to the Pacific. This change of plans necessitated many transfers in personnel, both in air and ground crews and required still more training in the handling and maintenance.

AN EARLY HISTORY OF THE 405TH *Ken Hoke, 405th (SS, 5/90)*

"The 15th Reconnaissance Squadron (M) was activated at Langley Field, VA, 15 January, 1941, Captain Millard C. Lewis, CO. Shortly thereafter, it moved to Jackson Air Base, MS, redesignated as the 405th Bomb Squadron (M) *(Editor: not until April, 1942)* equipped with B-26s and assigned additional personnel. Lewis was promoted to Major.

Some men of the 15th Reconn. Sq. (405th) at Jackson AAB. Can you Identify for us? From 38th BG Association web site.

"Immediately after Pearl Harbor, equipment was crated for a New York APO, but later changed to a San Francisco APO, and in January, 1942, we ended up at the Cow Palace.

"Lewis, promoted to Lt. Colonel, was a "Shape Up or Ship Out", "Spit and Polish" CO, (much respected by all of the original 40-man cadre) went through the War Department for approval to go overseas with the 405th although the position called for a Major.

"The 405th left California on the US Army Transport (USAT) Tasker H. Bliss, landing in Brisbane, Australia. We then went south to Ballarat where we were billeted in private homes. The late Kenny Balmer (an RAAF pilot at the start of the war) and I were billeted in the same home.

"We still had equipment for the B-26's originally assigned to us, including tow targets for gunnery practice. Within a few weeks, tents, mess hall, etc. were set up across from the Australian Air Base just outside of Ballarat. There the ground echelon underwent all types of training. Officers at the camp included Lt. D.C. Carpenter, Ass't. Adjutant; Lt. L. J. McLamey, CO.; Lt. C.M. Reeves, Supply Officer; Lt. W. A. Willis, Armament Officer; Capt. F. J. Amato, Medical Officer.

"Kenny Balmer, Wayne Gustin, Laughlin, Paul Camey, Tom Gordon, I and a few others had an Australian mother, owner/operator of the Ballarat Hotel, a wonderful person who made us feel at home and even wrote to our parents. We modified her draft beer bar so she could serve cold, and, while Australians liked their beer warm with plenty of salt, it did increase her business. Whenever one of the boys had too much, she would put him to bed in her hotel and have a cab take him out to the base before roll call.

"Balmer and I had birthdays in March and she closed the dining room early to give Kenny and me a wonderful birthday dinner, as she subsequently did for others she had taken under her wing. After our return to the States, she wrote to many of us."

Herb Swilling recalled that he, "pulled guard duty all the way " (26 days) to Brisbane on the Bliss. (SS, 5/89, HQ column.) There were 1,021 Headquarters and ground echelon personnel aboard the Bliss.

*(Continued page 6, **The U. S. Air Force**)*

The U. S. Air Force - *(from page 5)*

the Nile and were pushing him back. The Russian winter had stalled the Germans on the outskirts of Moscow and Leningrad and the approaches to Stalingrad.

The point of no return came on 7 December, 1941, for the United States. Japan had a Navy with more aircraft carriers than the U. S. and better planes flown by pilots with experience over China. Their superior naval, air, and experienced ground forces struck throughout the south and southwestern Pacific within hours after the Pearl Harbor attack. The U. S. declared war on 8 December, 1941.

Life in the U. S. began changing rapidly. Draft Boards were set up to provide an orderly flow of young men (all 18 to 40 year-olds were required to register) to the military branches. Automobile production ceased as factories were converted to the manufacture of essential military equipment. New factories sprang up to increase industrial production. Factories and shipyards began running three work shifts.

Population in manufacturing centers ballooned as people left the countryside to fill worker needs in the new factories. Women were recruited to fill positions on aircraft assembly lines and in ship yards left vacant by men inducted into military service.

Many customary clothing and food items were rationed. Nylon went to war; none could be used for civilian clothing. Women's skirt lengths were restricted and women applied a beige liquid to their legs to simulate the missing hosiery — all to support weapons manufacturing and the clothing, food, and equipment requirements of the military. Tires and gasoline were rationed and lower speed limits were established.

In the coastal areas, dim outs and even blackouts, were common to conceal ship and troop movements from the watchful eyes of enemy submarines along our coasts. Air raid blackouts and the firing of antiaircraft weapons were not unknown. Grandmas and grandpas became lookouts on hilltops watching for and reporting every airplane crossing the skies in coastal areas night and day.

A Japanese balloon carrying an incendiary device, having crossed the North Pacific, landed in the northwestern timber country. A Japanese submarine caused some minor damage by shelling a petroleum pump station on the coast north of Los Angeles.

War Bond drives were the vogue as civilians invested their increased income to support the war effort.

*(Continued page 7, **The U. S. Air Force**)*

The U. S. Air Force - *(from page 6)*

Many of the planes in the Philippines were destroyed by aggressive enemy action. By 17 December, the 14 remaining B-17s began evacuating to Australia, near Darwin. They did continue to fly missions out of Del Monte Field on Mindanao for some weeks.

On Christmas Eve, the President of the Philippines and his family were evacuated to Mindanao and later to Australia by B-17s a few days after General MacArthur reached Australia.

Boys who had dreamed in the 1930s lined up to become Aviation Cadets in both the Navy and the Army, joining those who had already enlisted in 1939 and 1940.

The Japanese had bombed Singapore and landed troops on the Malay Peninsula on 8 December. On 9 December, they landed on Tarawa and Makin Islands and entered Bangkok. They moved swiftly throughout the islands. On the 23rd, they took over Wake Island; on the 25th, Hong Kong surrendered.

On 4 January, 1942, they attacked Rabaul and soon attacked in the Celebes, Kavieng, Lae and Amboina.

In January, the B-17s evacuated from the Philippines continued to carry out missions on various Japanese targets, flying from Java, Sumatra, southern Borneo and the southern Celebes, staging through Del Monte Field on Mindanao for targets in the Philippines. B-25s also staged through Del Monte.

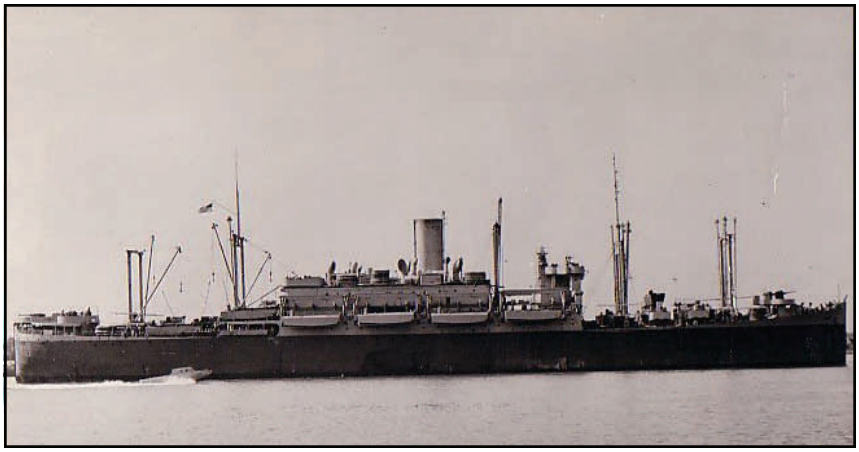
On 20 January, "Pappy" Gunn, having recently evacuated from the Philippines, began organizing the assembly of a load of P-40s in Brisbane that had arrived from the States. The assembly effort was staffed, in part, by fighter pilots recently arriving from the Philippines. The ground echelons of their squadrons had become infantry units on Bataan Peninsula.

The Japanese took over Rabaul and Kavieng on the 23rd and landed at Lae on the 25th; they took over Amboina, a prime harbor, on the 30th.

The U. S. made a comeback attack at Kwajalein and throughout the Marshal and Gilbert Islands on February 1.

As February came, the Germans set up a puppet government in Norway. The British were retreating again in North Africa. The Japanese advanced in the China/Burma/India theater.

So much of the German air force was occupied on the eastern front in Russia, Britain began to assume air superiority over the western continent, bombing German industrial centers and submarine bases during March. Russia launched an offensive, pushing the Germans back.



The **U. S. Army Transport (USAT) Tasker H. Bliss**, photograph used by permission of web site Navsource, Photo by Edward L. Walger PH2 USN, 1942-1945, courtesy Barbara Walger.

A Little Early History of the 38th BG *(SS 1/96)*

For a period of five weeks after the Declaration of War, the Group was plagued with rumors, order and counter-orders, packing and unpacking; then, after a period of three weeks absence, the ground personnel were joined by the air crews returning from their mission in Savannah. Finally, on General Order # 1, Hq. JAAB, the Group was ordered to proceed to San Francisco, Port of Embarkation, for further shipment overseas.

Just before the Group was to leave the Jackson Army Air Base, Colonel Knapp, the Group Commanding Officer, was promoted to the rank of full Colonel and relieved of his command, being sent to the III Bomber Command for further assignment. Colonel Fay R. Upthegrove became the new Group C. O. and his staff was: Executive and Adjutant, Captain Theodore C. Castle; Material Officer, Captain Charles H Belvin; Intelligence Officer, Lieutenant Frank McCoy.

The new Commanding Officers of the Squadrons were: H&H, Captain Richard H. Hartford; 69th Bomb Squadron (BS), Major William Lee; 70th BS, Major F. J. Garrison; 71st BS, Major Eugene R. Mussett; and 15th Reconn. Sq., Lt. Col. Millard Lewis.

For three days following 18 January, the Group took leave of Jackson Army Air Base. The ensuing trip was part of the largest troop movements to take place in the early days of the war, and there was much confusion. When mealtime arrived, the food was not ready to be served; cars loaded with troops stood on sidings for seemingly endless hours. But the men, in spite of it, were faithful to tradition and shouted at pretty girls wherever and whenever they could be seen.

The personnel aboard the train were a mixed lot. Some were of the original cadre that formed the group at Langley Field while others were so new they did not seem to know just what outfit to which they had been assigned. There were West Point Officers; there were newly commissioned officers, and there was a sprinkling of a few of the older Air Corps pilots. One officer had arrived at Jackson from Washington, D.C., at midnight and at dawn he was on the train for San Francisco.

In spite of the confusion encountered on the trip and the mix-ups that occurred when some of the personnel missed a train, there was only one AWOL to report upon arrival at San Francisco: a young Mexican gunner, who had skipped the train at El Paso for a visit home and did not return.

Officially, the 38th Bombardment Group (Medium) was constituted on 20 November, 1940, and activated on 15 January, 1941, with Squadrons 69, 70, and 71 and the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron, training in B-18s, then B-26s. The 15th Reconnaissance became the 405th BS on 22 April, 1942.

Some Concluding Recollections

Francis Kellogg remembered (SS, 9/88) that Edmund Lauder was the Chief Clerk in the Orderly Room of the !5th Reconnaissance Squadron attached to the 38th BG at Jackson, MS. " We named ourselves the 'Jackson Army' as the base was Jackson Army Air Base." Francis was the First Sergeant of the 15th and, "we had a well trained organization. I had been promoted to Technical Sergeant just seven days before Pearl was attacked, and was Crew Chief on a B-26. We all went to San Francisco. The officers lived at the Drake Wilshire Hotel and we enlisted men at Fort McDowell (Angel Island). After a month, we learned that most of the enlisted men had left for New Guinea. We were sent back to Patterson Field, Ohio, and reformed the 'Tokyo Raiders', still the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron."

Herb E. Alter Remembered *(SS, 1/93, 405th Col.)*

"I was involved in the convoy from Langley Field to Jackson, MS, when the 405th Squadron originated *(with a cadre from the 18th Reconn. of two officers and five men. Editor).* We picked up our B-26s at Martin in Baltimore, MD, flew to Langley Field to train our pilots and maintenance personnel, and then flew back to Jackson.

"Our next big operation was after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor when we were sent to Savannah, GA, on 9 December, 1941, for ten days, and then to coastal patrol over the Everglades to 200 miles out to sea. The armament on the B-26 was a .45-cal pistol on the hip of our tail gunner. The B-18s were sitting back at the field with two .30-caliber machine guns and two 500 pound bombs. It was our responsibility to radio back to the field if we saw any enemy ships."

Elmo Knutson Recalled *(SS, 9/90, 71st col.)*

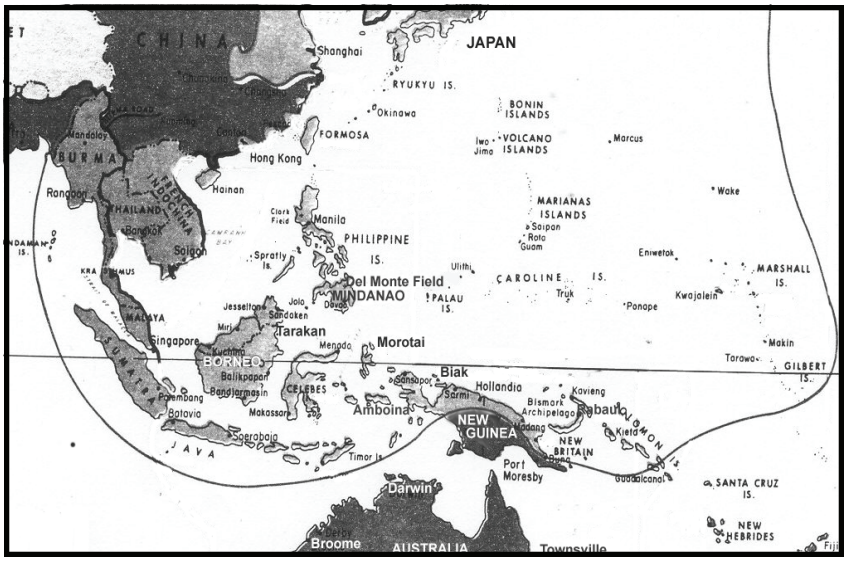
"I was assigned to the 38th BG, 69th Squadron in November, 1941, as Radio Operator-Gunner in the B-18s, but a couple of weeks later they brought in B-26s replacements which proved interesting and dangerous.

"In January, 1942, we started overseas. Combat crews were sent to Angel Island to wait for planes; ground crews were sent to Australia. In April we (air crews) went to Patterson Field to crash some more B-26s."

The Stranded Air Echelon

Following the departure of the Bliss, the air echelon was quartered at Ft. McDowell until 8 March when the air officers and crew chiefs entrained for Patterson Field, Ohio. The remaining personnel left Oakland on 2 April, also bound for Patterson.

At Patterson, personnel were engaged in service testing B-26s during the rest of April.



Japanese controlled area, April, 1942

*(Continued page 8, **The U. S. Air Force**)*

The U. S. Air Force - *(From page 7)*

Unknown to more than a handful of men, President Roosevelt's insistence on some retaliation against Japan for the 7 December attack spawned a plan. Two B-25s were taken far to sea on the carrier, Hornet. Near the Bahama Islands, each actually took off from the carrier deck.

The 17th Bomb Group, stationed at Pendleton, Oregon, and the only operational B-25 bomb group, was ordered to Columbia, South Carolina, on 15 February, 1942. Assigned to antisubmarine patrol on the U. S. southeast coast of the U.S., but volunteers for a secret, dangerous mission were recruited. Intensive training was begun in February at Eglin Field by the volunteers.

Eighteen new B-25Bs were modified in Minnesota, stripped of the bottom turret which was replaced with a gasoline tank; other tanks were added in the top of the bomb bay and in the crawlway above the bomb bay.

On 23 February, six B-17s bombed the Japanese-held Rabaul. The Japanese had bombed Darwin and Port Moresby. Allied ground and air units in the islands had to fall back to Australia.

The USAT Tasker H. Bliss arrived at Brisbane on February 25th and the 38th BG ground echelon unloaded, only to be reloaded and shipped off to Melbourne three days later. Here, the group was assigned to the U. S. Army in Australia.

The 22nd Bomb Group also arrived in Australia on the 25th but its planes would be ready for them to fly their first mission in early April. On 27 February, the first squadron of the 43rd Bomb Group arrived in Melbourne without its B-17s.

Also on the 27th, the Allied naval forces suffered a decisive defeat in the Battle of Java Sea. The Japanese forces moved at will throughout the southwest Pacific, destroying resistance throughout the Netherlands East Indies.

On 3 March, Broome, Australia, experienced a Japanese air raid.

On 7 March, the air defense in Australia consisted of only 16 heavy bombers, 16 medium bombers, and 136 fighters using maps from children's school books.

The Japanese soon took over Lae and Salamaua in New Guinea but were harassed by a U. S. carrier task force raiding party of 104 planes. During the month, the Japanese moved into the Solomon Islands

The U. S. soldiers continued their retreat on Bataan Peninsula. All of Java fell into Japanese hands. General MacArthur, his family, and staff were evacuated from Mindanao by B-17s to Australia.

The volunteers from the 17th Bomb Group

*(Continued, page 9, **The U.S. Air Force**)*

The U. S. Air Force - *(From page 8)*

continued intensive training in the U.S.. Norden Bomb sights were stripped from the planes so that none would fall into Japanese hands and they were not suitable for low level bombing. A cheap bomb sight was devised for low level bombing which the bombardiers practiced using. Late in March the volunteers and their new planes were sent to the Alameda Naval station and were loaded onto the Hornet's flight deck.

As April, 1942, arrived, there was a lull on the Russian front during the Spring thaw.

Early in April, the Japanese fleet roamed the Indian Ocean sinking several of the remaining British ships. Ceylon and India began to experience air raids. The Japanese navy owned the oceans for a quarter of the earth's circumference at the equator.

The defense of Burma was forced to yield to further Japanese pressure. The Burma Road, over which aid to China had been flowing, was cut.

The Bataan defenders were overwhelmed and the notorious Death March began. The Japanese took over control of most of the Philippine Islands.

On 2 April, the Hornet put to sea destined for a rendezvous with the Enterprise in the north Pacific. Task Force 16, two carriers and seven escort vessels, sailed due west.

A much needed spark of hope was ignited on 18 April. Sixteen B-25s, taking off from the deck of the Hornet, bombed Tokyo and other industrial areas of Japan. Although the planes were forced to crash land on the coast of China, thirteen crews managed to reach friendly Chinese; one landed at Russian Vladivostock and was interned. Two crews were downed in Japanese territory and imprisoned. Some men were shot on 15 October in retaliation for the embarrassment to the governing military clique caused by letting Tokyo be bombed.

The raid shocked the Japanese who now had to realize that their homeland was not invulnerable. The raid gave a great boost to America and to all the Allied nations. There was a spark of light at the far end of the long tunnel. It was the beginning of a turn towards victory.

The Japanese took cruel revenge on Chinese civilians in the eastern provinces for aiding the downed aviators. At the same time, they started planning for a countermeasure against further American intrusion into its sphere of control in the mid-Pacific.

As April drew to a close, the Japanese were in control of all of Malayan peninsula

*(Continued, page 10, **The U. S. Air Force**)*

60th ANNIVERSARY, 48 HOURS IN ENEMY TERRITORY

David Gunn

This past 30th of December, 2004, was the sixtieth anniversary of the 38th BG raid on the Japanese air base and oil field on Tarakan Island just off the east coast of Borneo. Twelve B-25s, assembled from all four squadrons because of their greater fuel capacity, were flown by crews from two squadrons.

My plane, from another squadron, was number three in the 405th Squadron formation. "Buzzy" Buswell, my copilot from our days at Greenville, was in the right seat. I had never flown with any of the other men that were with me that day: Capt. Mike Murphy (squadron gunnery officer) flying as observer gunner, Chris Strain (member of the 38th BG Association) flight engineer, Ken Allison (departed member of the 38th BG Association), radio operator, Pat Welch, armorer/tail gunner for this mission. Just before we were to start our engines, a jeep raced up the taxiway, stopped in front of my plane: Lt. Bob Cohen, assigned to take motion picture newsreel footage of low level bombing, jumped out and loaded his cameras and gear aboard my plane.

We turned to the target run after the very long flight from Morotai. As we advanced the throttles and sank down to tree top level, we picked up speed for the attack. "Buzzy" opened the bomb bay doors and I started firing all those .50-cal. guns.

Suddenly I flew through the descending debris of a bomb blast. Mud coated my windshield and I could see nothing ahead. My head jerked from side to side. If there were trees on either side, I pulled up a little; if there were none, I eased down a little. I managed to keep in formation. A little up, a little down; it seemed to go on a long time. My thumb never left the trigger during the long run. "Buzzy" dropped the bombs.

We came out over water and throttled back. I opened my window and slid my hand out to wipe some of the mud off so I could see forward. Our formation climbed to perhaps 1,000 feet as we swung north over a channel between Tarakan and the Borneo mainland. Three or four minutes later, as we headed east around the north end of Tarakan, the tail gunner called on the intercom - a plane in the second 405th flight had made a high speed ditching. The squadron leader turned the formation to survey the situation.

Survivors were seen exiting the plane but no life raft was deployed. Efforts were made to contact the Catalina rescue plane assigned to the mission. After several minutes, the Squadron leader assigned our plane and a plane from the second flight to cover the downed crew because we had a bit more gas than the other planes. The remaining planes headed for home. The plane in the water floated for some time.

The two covering planes circled the downed crew. One man in that crew, floating motionless on a flotation cushion, was carried away from the others by the inbound tide as other crew members were retrieving the equipment which had been thrown overboard to them.

During this time, Buzzy had thrown the switches to transfer fuel from the bomb bay tank to the wing tanks. After some time of circling and observation, we discovered that the fuel was not transferring. We checked all the gages. We made several attempts to pump fuel by hand and to discover what was wrong. We checked all the valve settings. Still no success.

My radio operator finally reported that the Catalina was half way to Morotai and could not come back for a rescue. I finally decided I did not have fuel to get to any safe landing spot. I assumed the Catalina would be out in a day or two and that they would know where to look for the downed crew. I decided to stay aloft as long as my fuel held out to give the men in the water as much time as possible to make it to shore and then I would ditch. The Cat could pick us all up at once.

I told the other plane I could not leave the area and for them to head to Dipalog (code *SAILBOAT)* on Mindanao, the nearest emergency field to which we had been directed. They acknowledged and turned away.

We tried to signal those in the water to head for shore but they could

*(Continued, page 10, **60th Anniversary, 48 hours in Enemy Territory)***

60th ANNIVERSARY, 48 HOURS IN ENEMY TERRITORY

(From page 9)

not get our signals. The man floating on the cushion had drifted to the shore of a small, marshy island in the channel. I decided to ditch as near him as possible when my fuel ran out. Until then, I continued to cover the crew in the water and make sure no Japanese boats were in sight.

Finally our gas gages were bouncing off of empty. I took one more sweep around the small island and checked toward Tarakan. Everything seemed to look as good as possible. I ditched within a hundred feet of the man now floating in the small shore waves. We pulled his dazed, semiconscious body out of the water as we carried our emergency gear ashore. The men still in the channel began paddling furiously but the stronger inbound tide carried them past us and west along the island shore. We moved back into jungle trees and vegetation.

Some time after the other crew had passed from our sight, a Japanese barge came around the point and headed for our plane, still visible in about five feet of water. We had heard one shot a little earlier. We wondered what might have happened to our buddies. Soldiers or marines climbed onto our plane and spent some time checking it out. They eventually motored away toward Tarakan.

Perhaps a half hour later, figures came in sight from the west. The four remaining men from the other crew joined us, now we were twelve in number. The tide was moving in and we tried, without success, to find some higher ground to make ourselves somewhat comfortable.

The man we had rescued was their radio operator, Jimmy Ingram, and had two compound fractures of his right arm. The flight engineer, Robert Blackwood, who had recently joined us, also had a fractured arm, cuts, and bruises (he had been in the turret when they ditched). The tail gunner, Reggie "Pop" Lansdowne had a back injury. The pilot, Bill Smith, and copilot, Jim Wallace, had shed their shoes when swimming to get the gear thrown out to them and were now in slimy stocking feet. And their feet were sore from the hike along the shore and through jungle growth.

"Pop" had been ejected from his tail turret position when the plane hit the water. He swam up to the plane and found the others trying to cut a hole in the top of the window to rescue the radio operator. "Pop" grabbed the handle to the now submerged rear escape hatch. Pulling it off the fuselage, he ducked his head down and into the plane. In darkness and water, he found Ingram's battered body and managed to pull him out of the plane. Ingram was not wearing a May West jacket and the others draped a semiconscious Ingram over a floatation seat cushion. In the following confusion, he had drifted away from them with the tide.

As darkness overtook us we inventoried our supplies. When the tide got higher, four men separated from our group looking for higher ground. They got lost and we did not see them again for about 40 hours. We placed the two men with broken arms in the raft we had. The injured "Pop" sat on the edge of the raft. The rest of us stood in knee-deep water or sat on the raft.

Soon after midnight, after the tide had receded, I decided to move our group about 300 yards north to be near a point of shoreline terrain unobstructed by trees from which we would have a broader angle of observation. We towed the injured men in the raft across an intervening mud flat and up an eight-foot bank into thick ferns on the point.

I injected morphine from time to time into the injured radio operator to keep him quiet but also easing his pain. We did our best to get comfortable as a light rain settled in. Rats ran over us as we tried to sleep. The rising tide found us standing in water again.

In early-morning gloom, a large dugout canoe with soldiers and a machine gun paddled past us. In the afternoon, our lookout at the edge of the ferns crawled back to us and whispered that a patrol was passing by along the shore below our hideout – we could hear their low voices and smell their cigarettes. Could they tell where we might be?

(To be continued in the May, 2005 issue.)

The U. S. Air Force -

(From page 9)

from central Burma to Singapore. They controlled most of the Dutch East Indies — Sumatra and Java on the west to western New Guinea and north to all of Borneo. They also controlled most of the Philippine Islands and moved in the southeast to the Solomon Islands and Guadalcanal. From Rabaul, they have pushed south and occupied much of the north coast of New Guinea. This brings Australia under frequent air raids and even an invasion alert of north Queensland was issued.

Their fleet roamed at will throughout the Gulf of Bengal and the Islands of the Dutch east Indies and east to the International Dateline.

In Europe, the British and the Germans exchanged night bombing raids of the cities. In North Africa, the British grudgingly yielded desert sands of Libya to German and Italian pressure. On the eastern front, the Germans were slowly slogging forward in some areas as the Spring thaw still hindered effective large scale actions. The Russians, better equipped for winter fighting, were pushing the Germans back in some areas and strengthening their positions as they prepared for summer attacks.

In Australia, the ground echelons of units without planes and air echelon personnel, were being broken up and units moved to various stations to help in the assembly of aircraft being brought into the theater. It was enough to make one think there was only mass confusion at the higher levels as they sought to establish a defensible perimeter that could stop the enemy.

Roy Lee Grover writes that the 38th BG was shipped to the Pacific in error. It seems that what was really needed was the 38th Air Base Group to establish air base facilities from which combat squadrons could operate. Mac Gac wrote that, " the 38th was scattered throughout Australia with part of the Headquarters Squadron and the Photo Section stationed near Darwin in the Northern Territories." (Mac became part of the 38th when he joined the Photo Section during this period.)

In all this confusion, the defenders were stabbing back with bombing missions by B-17s staging through Del Monte Field in the Philippines and missions to Rebaul and Lae.

For an excellent nineteen-page record of the preparation for and execution of the Doolittle raid on Tokyo go to:
www.pendletonairmuseum.org/dolittle.html

This web address has been tested and verified. ***Note*** *that there is* ***only one "o" in "dolittle"*** *in this address.*

REUNION 2006 IS COMING!!

Help us get ready to make the 38th better known.

Most of us who met in St. Louis are looking forward to the next reunion scheduled for sometime in **October 2006** in Phoenix. We are looking forward to two years of special things for the 38th BG Association and we invite you all to join us in our efforts as we move ahead in anticipation of October 2006.

We need ideas of where we can place the story of the 38th BG so that many eyes will see it tomorrow and long into the future. Your officers will much appreciate your contributions. Take time to keep in touch with your buddies and your Squadron Representatives.

Some Great Web Browsing Sites

The two following web sites have great information on the 69th and 70th Bomb Squadrons:

http://www.b-26marauderarchive.org/MS/MS302/MS302.htm
An extensive history of the 69th Bomb Squadron

http://www.b-26marauderarchive.org/MS/MS1714/MS1714.htm
"The lLost Bastards of the Pacific, the 69th and 70th 2 Squadrons"

http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/afhra

http://airforcehisory
These Air Force sites can be informative and useful in finding information about our past.

These addresses have been tested and work.

Don't forget to check the 38th BG web site frequently. You will enjoy pursuing the links Chris **has** included on the site.

You and the VA

The Veterans Administration has been making some changes in administering benefits. They seem to be making the system more like HMOs by assigning a personal provider. In some cases, perhaps many, new physical examinations are being required even though the veteran has had a recent physical examination.

Be sure to check with your clinic to ascertain that there will be no question of status should you require urgent medical services.

The Sun Setters would like to have a Veterans' affairs editor who will keep us posted as to changes being made in providing assistance to veterans. If you are close to the VA program, and would like to be our **Veterans' Affairs Editor**, please contact the editor.

REMEMBER - DUES ARE DUE ! !

New gunner, after his first mission: Boy, did we fly low over that target!
Old gunner: Say, Bud, how low did you fly?
New gunner: 100 feet over the target!
Old gunner: Say, fella, did you use oxygen?
New gunner: What are you, a wise guy?
Old gunner: Listen bud, when you come home from a mission and look at the photos you took, and see two paths in the man's hair in the ack-ack pit, you know your bomb bay doors were open when you flew over!

From "The 38th Frag Rag", Dec. 11, 1944. A perfect answer to a question I often get when talking about "low level bombing."

A WORD TO THE WIDOWS OF OUR EVER HONORED MEMBERS

One of the special things about the reunions is the number of sons, grandsons, brothers, wives and daughters of our members who join us, and especially those of some of our members who have been moved to "The Ever Honored List."

The Association would like for the widows of Life Members and widows of annual dues paying members who wish to continue to receive the newsletter to **please inform the S/T** by letter of their wishes. We look forward to hearing from you and keeping in touch. But we also understand that you may not wish to keep this connection going.

Bill McKinstry's (he's our Secretary/Treasurer) address information can be found on page 2 in the list of officers.

If we don't hear from you, we will, with reluctance, remove your name from our newsletter mailing list.

DID YOU KNOW THEM?

We frequently receive requests for information about men who were in the 38th. They come from relatives who yearn to know more about a loved one who may or may not still be living but who did not or is not now able to communicate about the time he spent with us.

Please get in touch with the editor, David Gunn. He can transmit information you give if you do not want a personal contact. Otherwise, He will try to put you in contact with the searcher. The phone number, e-mail, and postal addresses are on page 2.

Lt. Crawford Marvin Brown, 405th, 6/43-10/44, Daughter seeking information.

Lt. Col. Zane Corbin, any who knew his Grandfather, Grandson.

Ancil W. Hopper, (405th ?) Family seeking information.

Lt. Ralph Klus, Jr., 6/43-8/44, Daughter seeking information.

Sgt. Alan Libes,, 405th, pictured on Ed Maurer's crew with Lts. Booth and Pavel, Nieces seeking information.

Capt. John Long, 822nd, Col. Hawes' navigator on his last flight, Daughters seeking information.

John Mutu, 71st, gunner, seeks contact with others.

Ralph Overholt, 71st, now 90, Granddaughter seeking information.

Sgt Nicolas Rock, 822nd, Dec. 44 - Aug. 45, Son seeking information.

Lt. John Ralph Stack, Navigator (?), 823rd. John Weiland's crew down at Wewak, flying out of Port Moresby. Niece seeking information.

Herb Witchter, 71st Communications Section, mid 43 to 45, seeking any men who served with him, brother in law.

Rambling Reunion Reflections The Editor

Kay and I arrived in St. Louis on Wednesday afternoon and were shortly settled in our room. Some of us got together for a relaxing dinner while we waited for other friends to arrive.

Thursday morning we set out in a light shower for the tour that took us out to the Commemorative Air Force Hangar north and east of St. Louis. Our driver was the lead bus but he got lost. After getting that big bus turned around under very restricted conditions, we did arrive.

Among other planes at the hangar was a B-25. Unfortunately, it was painted up for one of the 345th Bomb Group squadrons. But it felt good to run my hand over the belly and pat its side (my wife didn't object to my roaming hands). We finally arranged ourselves for a group picture.

On the way back to our hotel, we stopped at the Lewis and Clark Museum in St. Charles. Again, we didn't quite get to see the best part, but it was interesting.. The replica of one of the Lewis and Clark boats was somewhere else engaged in a special commemorative event.

The River Boat dinner was fun. Watching the sunset behind the St. Louis arch skyline was a relaxing period of time before our dinner. As our boat churned up the river the lights along the shore added to a pleasant evening.

In addition to just visiting, we enjoyed the music by a man who really knew how to make Dixie Land music. A few of our group enjoyed doing a little dancing and demonstrating steps a lot of us couldn't do. The two tour guides at our table were all hyped up about the St. Louis Cardinals winning their division championship. They also told us much about the interesting aspects of the St. Louis area.

Our business meeting time was much simpler than past reunions. Yes, there were fewer of us old timers there. But things moved quickly. Jack DeTour had volunteered for the presidency before the reunion. Various individuals volunteered from the floor for the other positions we usually have to fill and were quickly confirmed. Everything was on a very positive level. Dick Field had served through a difficult time of health problems but the Group had held together. We send our best wishes to Dick, appreciating his service under difficult circumstances.

Bill McKinstry gave us news that partially explained the fewer attendees. Many of our group had been given a final assignment since we last met in Colorado Springs. He read the list and we, with fond memories, accepted their departure from our midst with reluctance.

Al Kennedy gave us a report of his experiences over the past two years with Larry Hickey. Larry did not meet with us this year which was really just as well (who wanted to hear the third verse, or thirty third verse, which was the same as the first?). Al reported that Larry's health makes it most unlikely our book will ever be published. The 22nd Bomb Group book is still not in the hands of the printer (this spring ? ? ?). Even though we have been led to believe by Larry that our book would be next, we have learned since the reunion that he has mentioned to other inquiries for his other promised books that there is another book (maybe others ? ?) which he is bringing out which would precede ours.

On the positive side, Larry has given Al the photo collections he has related to the 38th plus over 2000 pages of research notes and textual information. Al has identified all the pictures and has made a catalog listing of them. He has arranged all the textual material and digitized it, recording it on a CD. That disk is computer searchable. The pictures have all been placed on CDs.

A group of Association officers will be reviewing all this material and arranging a final set of CDs for all paid up members of the Association (see mentions elsewhere in this news letter).

The new officers and editors of the newsletter sat in a meeting to discuss the future of the news letter. It was envisioned that the news letter could be a vehicle for producing a history of the 38th Bomb Group in a form that could become a coffee table book which will convey a sense to our friends and loved ones of what we did, our heritage (see mentions elsewhere in this newsletter).

It will never take the place of the book we have been dreaming of for fifteen years but we are aiming to make it a reasonable record. It will largely be a "history" told in the memories of our members. So give us your part.

A great group of men have volunteered to move the Association along through coming years. All of our members can become a part of this living history of some from "The Greatest Generation" by supporting our officers and our news letter

Our reunion was capped by a good dinner and a great program on Saturday evening. A local St. Louis musical group of young people and kids, The Patt Holt Singers with The Connection Kids, stirred us deeply with dramatic in costume renditions of music from the 1904 St. Louis World Fair era and from the World War II era. We could hardly stay in our seats as they sang America the Beautiful and God Bless America and of course, The Army Air Force Song. Many eyes went blurry as those young people poured their hearts into a wonderful performance.

We appreciated what John and Sherry did to make our reunion very special.

On Sunday afternoon, Kay and I drove down to Jefferson Barracks below St. Louis. Some of you know about JB. I went through my enlisted basic training at JB. Chris Strain talked about being in "pneumonia gulch" at JB. It is now a county park.

A park docent told me about notable persons (some foreign, even POWs) buried at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery adjoining on the south, among them, Major Ralph Chelli, former 405th CO. We drove down to the site and took pictures of the resting place of his re-

Major Cheli's name is in the lower left corner of the large stone. The small stone is typically placed at gravesites of all who have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.